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Emotion, Interaction and the Structure-Agency Problem:

building on the sociology of Randall Collins

Anthony King

Introduction

Today, sociology is in crisis. Having established itself as an independent discipline in western universities about a century ago, sociology has declined in institutional prominence and intellectual influence. This crisis itself a partial response to three external intellectual threats. Firstly, exploiting new findings in neuroscience and genetics, evolutionary psychologists have sought to reduce human social behaviour to biological, evolutionary adaptation. Secondly, sociology is under assault from individualism, an eternal opponent. Of course, individualism is most forcefully represented in economy theory with rational choice theory which possesses a long-standing challenge to sociology. However, ironically, sociologists have themselves adopted an increasingly individualist perspective in their own work in the last three decades, focusing on individual and, in fact, personal perceptions, actions and emotions as the prime locus of investigation and, indeed, explanation. Finally, sociology is under attack from things themselves. Technological determinism has always been a current in sociology. However, sociologists have now explicitly sought to de-throne the special status of the human social relation or social interaction with a re-orientation on material objects. Of course, Bruno Latour's work is at the forefront here. His oeuvre is predicated on a rejection of classical, collectivist sociology in the form of Emile Durkheim and a putative revaluation of the individualist and materialist work of Gabriel Tarde. For Latour, the actor-network recognises the agency of material things to argue that human action is not some much a social practice as an assemblage of actors and actants or people and things. Ostensibly, in Latour's system accords equal status to the human and the object. Latour's work has been hugely

influential in contemporary sociology as the prosthesis, the actant or the assemblage supersede the social as the determinant of human practice. The rise of animal-human studies might be seen as part of this same attempt to de-centre social existence outwards onto non-human agents.

Sociology is in a dangerous condition, then, facing very considerable threats to its academic integrity. In many ways, the current challenges from individualism, biology and materialism echo currents of thought in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, from which sociology originally arose. It is not certain sociology will survive the current challenge as an independent discipline; already, the dissolution of sociology and sociologists into departments of history, business and organizational studies and politics is very evident. However, if sociology is to survive as a coherent discipline, the best strategy would seem to be to re-affirm the principles and methods which have historically been at its core. Of course, such a re-affirmation cannot be mere atavism. Sociology must necessarily develop. However, the future of sociology as an intellectual enterprise which prioritises the distinctive properties of the human social group as an explanatory category would seem to be predicated on a collective emphasis on its own traditions and theories.

It is here that Randall Collins' work is so important for the discipline today and, perhaps, to its future. From his classic work on conflict sociology in the 1970s to his most recent writing on interaction ritual chains and violence, Randall Collins has explicitly sought to fuse the insights of Max Weber and Emile Durkheim in order to explain social order. Specifically, by integrating Weber's work on the status group with Durkheim's analysis of the ritual, he has sought to explain not only specific patterns of social activity but also, crucially, to connect micro-local practices which enduring, social structurings. The aim of this paper is to show explore – and to celebrate – Collins' achievement in this domain. The paper intends to show how Weber and Durkheim are united in Collins' work to generate a

creative synthesis which has genuine critical and analytical power. As Collins stated in his first major monograph, *Conflict Sociology*: ‘The path forward to a general explanatory theory is to build on Weber’s nominalist conflict approach to stratification and organizations and to treat any longer historical pattern as a historicist element of these elements. Durkheim is to be borrowed from selectively in order to round out the theory at the point of understanding the emotional and cognitive dynamics of interpersonal interaction’ (Collins 2004: 5). In the course of Collins’ work, it is possible to argue he has become more Durkheimian. Yet, the programme laid out in *Conflict Sociology* has endured.

This synthesis still provides a hugely valuable basis for sociology in the twenty-first century; Weber and Durkheim – and Collins’ appropriation of them - are immediately relevant to the contemporary situation and to the predicament in which sociology finds itself. However, in the face of the existential challenges to the discipline, a mere re-statement of Collins’ work may be inadequate. Consequently, to highlight the indispensable contribution of Randall Collins to sociology and to profess the discipline at a time of deep uncertainty, the paper will also go onto describe how Collins’ account might be developed and augmented. Specifically, the paper will seek to build upon and, perhaps, refine Collins’ concept of Emotions and Emotional Energy, the heart of his Interaction Ritual Chain Theory, to produce a sociological theory which is sufficiently robust and coherent to be able to suppress the challenges posed by genetics, individuals and materialism. The aim of the paper is, in short, to reaffirm the sociological vision of Randall Collins as a framework for twenty-first century sociology.

Interaction Ritual Chain Theory: Micro Sociology

In order to appreciate Collins’ Interaction Ritual Chain Theory, it is necessary to situate it within Collins’ conflict sociology. Collins’ conflict sociology was a response to Parsonian

sociology which dominated American sociology until the early 1960s and which he had experienced as an undergraduate at Harvard. Randall Collins objected to the ‘artificial convergence’ which Parsons effected between Weber and Durkheim that, in Collins’ view, ‘emasculated Weber’s theory’ (Collins 2004: 5). He sought to create a vivid sociological synthesis which remained true to the central precepts of the works of both masters. In order to do this, Collins had to move beyond Parsons’s rather contrived analysis of Weber’s concept of charisma to focus on the idea of the status group. For Collins, the status group was at the very heart of Weberian sociology and represented his most important and fertile concept.

In *The Credential Society* and *Weberian Sociological Theory*, Randall Collins describes this theory in full. In his famous definition of status groups Weber claims that status groups always monopolise certain ‘ideal and material goods or opportunities’. In order to do this, any would-be status group has to exclude others (Weber 1978: 935). The status group has to form itself into a unified entity, closed to outsiders. Therefore, the members of the group have to recognise the special relationship which binds them to each other to the exclusion of others; at this point, as they begin to cooperate with each other exclusively, they recognise their distinctively *collective* interests. As Weber stresses, in order for a group to emerge, its members have to recognise that they share something in common. The group has to select certain criteria of group member which all consciously recognise. These criteria are not imposed upon group members by prior economic facts. They are ultimately arbitrary; ‘It does not matter which characteristic is chosen in the individual case: whatever suggests itself most easily is seized upon’ (Weber 1978: 342). They are established only insofar as the group itself recognises them. Lifestyle, skin-colour, language, or gender could all be used to distinguish group members from non-group members and, indeed, these criteria have historically been employed. On the basis of Weber’s relatively brief comments about status groups in *Economy and Society*, Collins constructs a sophisticated and comprehensive social

theory which explains the formation and dynamics of macro-social order. Ultimately, societies consist of a broadly stable but always conflictual hierarchy of status groups.

Collins's Weberian sociology is hugely fertile as a resource for understanding macro-social order and its transformation over time. Yet, Collins remains dissatisfied with this Weberian theory because it lacked an adequate micro-sociology. For Collins, a sustainable sociology must have a theory of micro-interaction. As he notes in *Conflict Sociology*: 'Distinctively human forms of cognition and communication are built on top of the capacity for social ties...not the basis of them' (Collins 2004: 55). For Collins, social interaction comes first; it is the point of origin both for individual capacities and social order in general, not the other way round. Indeed, Collins maintains rightly that no matter how large and complex societies become, at their foundation they can consist only of face-to-face interactions. This is necessarily where the action is; humans live in and through their interactions: 'Everyone's life, experientially, is a sequence of microsituations, and the sum of all sequences of individual experience in the world would constitute all the possible sociological data' (Collins 1981: 987). Later he affirmed the point: 'Micro-situational encounters are the ground zero of all social action and all sociological evidence. Nothing has reality unless it is manifested in a situation somewhere. Macro-social structures can be real, provided they are patterned aggregates that hold across micro-situation, or networks of repeated connections from one micro-situation to another (thereby, comprising, a formal organization)' (Collins 2004b: 259). The question for Collins is how is it possible for this almost infinite spiral of interactions to cohere into the relatively stable social order which we experience.

Durkheim becomes a critical resource for Collins because especially in his later work, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Durkheim laid out a theory of how communities form through their face-to-face social interaction. In *Conflict Sociology*, Collins observes that

Durkheim had asked how does a social group create a belief or call forth the Holy Spirit (Collins 2004: 57)? The answer is through periodic ritual congregation in heightened moments of collective effervescence; the creation of collective belief ‘first of all requires... a group of people concentrating their attention to generate a common mood’ (Collins 2004: 58). For Collins, the emotional dimension of Durkheim’s work on ritual is absolutely critical. The aggregation of the group gives rise to the possibility of common beliefs but the emotions of personal ecstasy and collective effervescence which are cathected in the ritual invest those beliefs with power. As the worshippers gather to celebrate their deity, their totem becomes imbued with intense collective emotion. The totem radiates with intellectual and religious significance and simultaneously becomes the object of awe, love and respect. Electrified with collective emotion, the totem becomes sacred. As such, although it relies on the congregation, the totem is able to direct the beliefs and actions of worshippers not only in the ritual but for significant periods after it. Even away from the ritual, they behave in ways which are consistent with the beliefs which they expressed in the ritual and the emotions cathected there.

Durkheim, of course, famously focused on the aboriginal ritual. However, mobilizing Goffman, Collins seeks to apply the Durkheimian theory of ritual – and the central role of emotions in that process – to all social interaction. For Collins, as for Goffman, every social encounter is a mini-ritual and society ultimately consists of a complex helix of interaction ritual chains. Collins first discussed the concept of the interaction ritual chain in his 1981 *American Journal of Sociology* article. There, the interaction ritual chain became a critical means of connecting micro- and macro-sociology. However, the full theory of the Interaction Ritual Chain was fully proposed only in 2004 with the publication of Collins’ eponymously titled work. There, Collins argues that an IRC consists of four elements; ‘group solidarity,

emotional energy, symbols that represent the group and feelings of morality (Collins 2004b: 49). IRC theory is plainly Durkheimian.

According to IRC theory, interaction rituals occur whenever individuals encounter each other. At this moment, there is a 'process of rhythmic coordination', which is 'almost always unconscious' (Collins 2004b: 74). For IR to develop, 'rhythmic entrainment': 'Individuals who get into the flow of an interaction have made a series of adjustments that bring their rhythms together; hence they can 'keep the beat' with what their partner is doing by anticipation, rather than by reaction' (Collins 2004b: 78). For Collins, intense emotions arise from this rhythmic entrainment; indeed, in many cases emotional entrainment occurs, where the participations in an interaction are mutually enrolled into a common emotional status. The participants in an interaction become happy, sad, angry or indignant together.

Collins' discussion of emotional energy is both fascinating and radical. For Collins, humans are always striving for and driven by emotional energy; they are motivated to participate in interaction rituals for the emotional payoff which they accrue from them, even though they are not always aware of this incitement. Humans are not primarily motivated by material or intellectual interests in their encounters but rather by more immediate visceral rewards. They are driven by emotional needs and above all the requirement for emotional energy to engage in interaction rituals, even if they are not always fully aware of it: 'rituals begin with emotional ingredients' (Collins 2004b: 105). IRC theory explores how emotions, cathected in face-to-face exchange, structure the interaction ritual itself and, therefore, the social structure more widely. For Collins, power and emotions are mutually implicated with each other: 'Power derives from a variant of the basic IR model' (Collins 2004b: 105). Durkheim focused on social solidarity in rituals which produced 'heightened mutual focus and bodily emotional entrainment' (Collins 2004b: 125). By contrast, Collins is particularly interested in unequal rituals, where power inequalities begin to emerge: 'Power is an

asymmetrical focus of attention upon such a situation, so that one side patterns on the energy that all the participants have mutually produced. In a power ritual, the social battery is revved up, but the benefit goes largely to one side' (Collins 2004b: 125). In an unequal interaction ritual, the dominant party in the exchange absorbs and is empowered by the emotional energy to dominate social settings beyond that immediate ritual. Emotional energy coalesces into genuine political power and privilege. Moreover, 'IR chains often have a circular, self-perpetuating form. Persons who dominant rituals gain EE, which they can use to dominant further IRS. Persons who are at the centre of attention gain EE, which they can use to convene and energise still further gatherings, therefore making themselves yet again the centre of attention...Status group leaders re-create the energy that makes them popular' (Collins 2004b: 131). As a result of their participation in interaction rituals, in which they are re-empowered affectively, certain individuals emerge as 'energy stars' in a particular milieu. They are the focus of emotional attention and the source of emotional energy; they animate and motivate others who are brought under their gravitational influence.

For Collins, emotional dominance originates not in the individuals themselves. Energy stars are the situational products of interaction rituals themselves where particular individuals happen to occupy a privileged locus in the interaction ritual, on which collective attention and emotions are focused. They are then charged up necessarily with charisma: 'My argument is far from holding that the upper classes are uniquely energetic individuals: they are products of processes that affect all of us, and in which all of us (very likely) are pretty much interchangeable' (Collins 2004b: 132).

The point is however, that once persons have been invested with emotional capital, once they become effervescent, they are systematically advantaged in their social encounters. They are winners and are able to accrue other economic and political benefits. Indeed, ultimately, social stratification is the macro-product of micro-agglomerations of emotional

energy which give particular individuals and the groups of which they are members systematic advantages over others: 'In power situations, gains of emotional energy by one person and EE loss by the other person are reciprocally related' (Collins 2004b: 121). However, in most interaction rituals, even 'losers' gain some emotional reward and, consequently, although they must defer to the energy stars, whom they have helped create, they are willing to participate in repeated interactions.

Interaction Ritual Chain Theory places a huge explanatory weight on emotional energy – effervescence - as the decisive factor linking local encounters with broader order. Emotional energy binds individuals together in the interaction, producing stability there, multitudes of which encounters aggregate into the grand social orders of which society, including its status group hierarchy, is comprised. The interpersonal hierarchies established in the interaction are amplified outwards. Specifically, emotional energy is the means by which individual actions in micro-settings are articulated with the creation of status groups hierarchies. Effectively, the energy stars in local interactions generate local conformity in micro-encounters. Stable status groups coalesce from recurrent interpersonal conformity. Individuals are motivated to participate in rituals and to contribute to this affective solidarity by their own emotional needs. Consequently, the micro-groupings of which status groups are ultimately comprised are formulated in recurring spiral of intensely emotional social situations. Effervescence ties the entire hierarchy together, linking the micro- and the macro.

Assessing Interaction Ritual Theory

There is no doubt that Collins has produced a highly creative and suggestive theory which synthesises micro and macro. The theory is plausible; empirically, it has produced some fascinating and profound insights. It has been the subject of much discussion (e.g. Abbott 1999; Munch 2005; Paget 2001; Schwalb 2007; Summers-Effler 2002; Collins 2008b); the

concept of forward panic has already had considerable influence in the study of conflict and war. Yet, some refinement of it may be possible. Specifically, the linkage between emotionally charged and emotionally motivated interaction and wider social ordering may require some reinforcement. It is here that the Interaction Ritual Chain Theory and above all the concept of emotional energy may require some development. Collins' description of the emotional energy provides an explanation of how sometimes hierarchical solidarity is generated in local settings. Yet, while this account of how emotion plays a role in micro-social solidarity is compelling, it does not fully explain how individual action in the interaction ritual, generates or defends the collective goods of a status group more widely. The micro-macro link is not assured. It is not clear that emotional energy is sufficient to explain how conformity in the immediate social interaction amplifies out into the wider social order. Yet, this is the critical requirement of a theory which connects the micro and the macro. Collins must be able to show how micro-processes in the interaction ritual generate the collective goods on which enduring status groups are based.

Interaction Ritual Chain Theory assumes that when the solidarity created around an energy star in the interaction ritual will be consistent with the wider status group and its collective interest. In an interaction ritual, subordinates will defer to the emotional energy of the dominant party. Consequently, they will behave in manner consistent with the interests and perspectives of the energy star. Since energy stars are themselves the representatives of specific status groups and the wider collective, by deferring to energy stars, individuals conform and re-affirm the wider social order. Because individuals want emotional gratification which only participation in the interaction ritual can give and which for most only deference to the energy star provides, they are motivated to conform. On the basis of their personal emotional requirements, individuals conform with the wider imperatives of the status group.

Yet, at this point, Collins' theory of emotional energy may not always identify the precise emotional commitments which underpin interaction. There are at least two possible cases when emotional energy - effervescence - alone is not sufficient to encourage the conformity which is requisite to ensure the linkage between the interaction ritual and the status group or wider social order. Firstly, there are many cases when the dominant individual in a particular local setting does not generate any special local emotional energy at all. Many aspirant 'energy stars' are decidedly lacking in charisma and their followers gain very little emotional reward from their deference to them. Peter Drucker's work on management is illuminating here. Drucker punctured many of the myths about the mystical powers of many of America's most celebrated leaders like Henry Ford, Alfred Sloan or George Marshall.

Dwight Eisenhower, George Marshall, and Harry Truman were singularly effective leaders, yet none possessed any more charisma than a dead mackerel. Nor did Konrad Adenauer, the chancellor who rebuilt West Germany after World War II. No less charismatic personality could be imagined than Abe Lincoln of Illinois, the raw-boned, uncouth backwoodsman of 1860. And there was amazingly little charisma to the bitter, defeated, almost broken Churchill of the interwar years; what mattered was that he turned out in the end to have been right. (Drucker 1992: 101)

In each of these cases, highly effective leaders who were able to enjoin collective action possessed little emotional energy. Their followers were not emotionally inspired. Yet, without coercion, they conformed. What forces were at work to enjoin their cooperation in the light of an absence of emotional energy?

There is a second scenario where emotional energy does not automatically generate conformity. It is conceivable that in any local ritual, the participants generate intense emotional rewards for all the actors. The interaction ritual is very successful in emotional terms. However, the emotional rewards are entirely incompatible with wider organisational

interests which they were supposed to enforce. The interaction ritual has become a deviant social event in which the emotional rewards were no longer aligned with the wider collective interests of the society, organization or status group but only with the immediate local social group. This is, in fact, a danger in most social situations in which sub-culture emerge to the great enthusiasm of their participants but in opposition to higher social goals. It is a constant problem in large social organisations. A very obvious example of this occurred in Vietnam. There, black American soldiers adopted their own distinctive sub-culture, which involved distinctive patois, dress and body gestures. Black soldiers found this new solidarity emotionally rewarding and the solidarity was highly affective, arising from an intense sense of grievance and injustice (Moskos 1975). Yet, of course, while the black soldiers gained huge emotional energy from their participation in this subculture, they employed that energy not to promote the goals of the US Army but to subvert them. Disobedience, mutiny and ultimately the murder of their white superiors followed on from their membership of this sub-culture. Similarly, cheats, protestors and objectors can also prioritise their own individual emotional rewards over conformity. They destroy rituals entirely in favour of their selfish emotional ends.

Empirically, these social breaches are rare though. Normally interaction rituals pass off at least adequately. Yet, they are always a possibility. There is little in Collins' Interaction Ritual Theory which explicitly explains why individuals do not adopt these strategies more regularly – or even constantly. Interaction Ritual Theory assumes that individuals will conform with the emotional economy on offer, even though this is evidently not always the case. The counter-examples suggest something important. Collins' theory is certainly not wrong but something is missing. There is some other motivating factor suffusing interaction rituals and taking precedence over effervescence; otherwise in the face of an emotionally

unfavourable interaction, humans would regularly choose to rebel and to deviate. The question is: what are these mechanisms?

Reconstructing IR Theory: shame and honour

Randall Collins' work is heavily influenced by Erving Goffman's sociology and, in fact, that corpus of work offers an approach to rehabilitate Interaction Ritual Theory. The goal of Goffman's interactionist sociology was to provide an ethnography of modern western society. Goffman effectively wanted to create an anthropology of western and especially American culture to show how social order was maintained through the tiny and apparently irrelevant micro-practices of everyday life. Goffman explicitly denied that there were any universals in these encounters: 'From the fact that greetings are found among many higher primates, as well as any number of preliterate societies and all civilised ones, it would be easy to conclude that something like access rituals are universally found in societies. But, of course, universals are exactly what good ethnography brings into doubt' (Goffman 1971: 93). However, while the empirics might be cultural and historically specific, he believed he had identified a fundamental mechanism which underpinned all social interaction – and indeed social order: 'The person tends to conduct himself during an encounter so as to maintain both his own face and the face of the other participants' (Goffman 1967: 11). No matter what the situation, humans are concerned to preserve their credibility in the eyes of those with whom they are immediately interacting. The maintenance of face is an index of cooperation and a connotes the trust participants have invested in each other in an interaction. Very intense emotions are, therefore, attached to the preservation of one's own and others' faces; visceral embarrassment and shame typically follow a major defacement when cooperation breaks down for accidental or intentional reasons.

The significance of Goffman's work can be highlighted when it is considered alongside Solomon Asch's conformity experiments, especially as discussed by Thomas Scheff. Asch's conformity experiments are well-known and there is no need to discuss their particularities at length. In a series of ingenious experiments, Asch sought to show by a series of simple collective tests how susceptible the members of a group were to its collective pressures. Humans want to conform, even in situations where they, as individuals, must objectively know that the position to which they were consenting is objectively incorrect. Thus, many of Asch's subjects agreed to simple mathematical calculations which were manifestly wrong to the differential line lengths which were clearly perceptually inaccurate. The rationale his subjects subsequently gave for their irrational conformity was instructive: 'I felt like a silly fool...A question of being a misfit...they'd think I was queer. It made me seem weak-eyed or weak-headed, like a black sheep' (Scheff 1988: 403). Subjects were worried by the prospect of being singled out by the group as an outsider and, therefore, shamed by their peers. A visceral sense of shame drove them to conform. In his discussions of shame, Scheff plausibly describes the ubiquity of shame, operating quite universally across social life, unseen and subtly encouraging even demanding conformity: 'I propose that the degree and type of deference and attendant emotions of pride and shame make up a subtle and pervasive system of social sanctions' (Scheff 1988: 396). He continues: 'The deference-emotion system functions virtually continuously, even when we are alone' (Scheff 1988: 396). Just as Goffman argues that embarrassment operations constantly run through social life, enjoining individuals to interact predictably with each other, so Scheff claims that shame drives individuals to conform.

Individuals who behave well in interaction gain the respect of their interlocutors and accrue emotional rewards for this congeniality. Goffman – and Scheff – highlight the role of shame – and honour – as an underlying motivational force in all human social interaction.

Humans are compelled as individuals and groups to fear and avoid shame and desire honour. They are also well aware of the reasons for this fear of shame – which Asch's subject highlighted with great clarity. Non-conformity – and the shame it induces - brings exclusion. As Asch noted: 'They were dominated by their exclusion from the group which they took to be a reflection on themselves. Essentially they were unable to face a conflict, which threatened in some undefined way, to expose deficiency in themselves. They were consequently trying to merge into the group in order not to feel peculiar' (Scheff 1988: 403). A shamed individual is initially disdained, rebuked or ridiculed but ultimately shaming involves exclusion. Of course, the exclusion might be temporary or partial. Indeed, in most groups this is precisely what occurs. A member behaves badly, acting out of line with the group's interest and values. This person is cautioned by the group and, often, cooperation is temporarily withheld; a reprobate is sent to Coventry or denied some routine benefits of group membership. Eventually, a transgression is forgiven and the perpetrator is re-incorporated. However, in some cases, the shaming processes leads to extended or permanent expulsion.

It is often easy to assume that the shame/embarrassment mechanism of which Goffman and Scheff speak is simply referring to an emotional pressure. Humans simply do not like the feeling of embarrassment/shame and so avoid it. Certainly, the emotion of shame is among the most powerful which humans can experience. It is intense. The purely emotional power of shame is real and, of course, it is precisely its visceral character which Collins describes so well in his work. However, although shame is a powerful emotion, the power of shame is not merely affective. There is an actual dimension which it represents and enforces: exclusion. A shamed individual is excluded temporarily or permanently from the group. The shamed, therefore, lose their access to the group, their fellow members and all the benefits which it and they offer. The mechanisms of shame and honour are the means by

which groups control access to their collective goods. In some cases, these goods are trivial: entertainment or amusement. Yet, often collective goods are critical; they refer to economic opportunities, professional careers, health, food, water and, ultimately, even personal security. Because all individuals want and need collective goods, shame and honour motivate group members to cooperate with their fellows because contributing to the collective good earns honour and, therefore, tangible reward, while negating the collective good is condemned with shame.

It is at this point, when the mechanisms of shame and honour are recognised, that Collins Interaction Ritual Theory genuinely begins to connect the micro- and the macro. It is possible to see how face-to-face interactions can actually generate and, indeed, enforce conformity, even when there is little emotional motivation to comply. Individuals routinely act responsibly, even though it is inconvenient, tiring and boring to do so, because only their continued cooperation will ensure access to collective goods, on which they depend. Marshall and Lincoln may have been very dull individuals but, as leaders, they offered their subordinates a goal – military victory - from which they collectively benefited and, although not inspiring, they were scrupulous in their fairness towards them. Consequently, in the long and short-term, their followers were rewarded with important collective goods through their subservience, despite the lack of immediate emotional reward.

Active deviance is similarly restricted by established mechanisms of shame and honour and the allegiances which are built around it. Sub-group deviance is always an eminent possibility in any human community, as black American soldiers showed in Vietnam; it probably increases in proportion to the size of the group. However, because large social groups and organisations have material rewards to offer their members (always attached to the emotional-deference system of honour and shame), it is often hard for a sub-cultural deviance to emerge and establish itself. The threat of shame and expulsion raises the

costs of membership of any prospective deviant group. It is true that deviant individuals can generate immediate emotional excitement, especially in the moment of breaching. When employees stage dramatic resignations, sports players cheat spectacularly, or a person is egregiously rude in an encounter, it generates intense effervescence.

Sometimes, deviant groups develop lasting and concrete collective goods for their would-be members. Black soldiers in Vietnam certainly achieved this. However, these goods are often less secure and attractive than those which are already proffered by the existing order. It is very difficult for would-be resistant groups to generate new sub-organisational solidarities and to attach shame and honour mechanisms to these groupings and the goods they offer. Consequently, although individuals can always theoretically mobilise themselves into new deviant interest groups, in routine social life, individuals tend to conform because the costs are often simply too high, even if they might earn very significant immediate emotional reward from breaching a social interaction. The effervescence of rebellion is often quite evanescent, leaving an individual excluded and marginalised, denied access to existing collective resources without providing an avenue to new ones.

Effervescence is real and it is an important dimension of social life, then. It does bind individuals together; it imbues collective goals, norms, ideas and values with a unique moral focus. However, alone it does not necessarily enjoin the level of conformity which routinely characterises social life. An alternative emotional mechanism operates to engender cooperation in micro-settings; shame and honour, rather than effervescence alone, underpin social interaction precisely because they immediately correlated to access to collective goods. Indeed, effervescence is usually subordinate to and dependent upon the processes of mutual shaming and honouring. Typically, effervescence reaches its highest point in interactions when all the participants are cooperating with each other seamlessly to generate highly valuable collective goods. At this point, knowing they are helping each other, bound in

intense relations of trust, and recognising and honouring each other for their contributions, they achieve the heightened emotional state which Collins so brilliantly analyses.

Conclusion

The work of Randall Collins spans five decades from 1970 to 2020. It represents a major achievement and a huge contribution to sociology today. In that work, Collins has sought to effect a highly original and creative synthesis of the work of Weber and Durkheim in order to connect micro and macro-levels. It is an ambitious project. Against the individualism, biological and technological determinism of psychologists, economists and even sociologists, Collins affirms the central importance specifically social interaction. Collins demonstrates that human social interaction and the groups which arise from it has unique, inalienable properties which determine individual and collective practice. His aim is to try and describe those processes in detail and to elaborate them through rich and wide-ranging empirical example.

The endeavour is admirable. However, in order to reinforce Collins' project and to defend sociology against its enemies, this paper has suggested that it might be possible to develop Collins' work and, above all, his Interaction Ritual Theory. Specifically, the paper argues that while Collins is absolutely right to focus on emotions, his formulation of emotional energy in IR theory might be refined. Collins is surely right to claim that effervescence is a vital dimension of human social life. Humans inevitably create some kind of effervescence in their social interactions; the moods created in company are always different from those expressed in solitude and, of course, there are certain emotions which are impossible to reproduce alone. Effervescence unites individuals – and motivates them to interact and cooperate – and it invests shared symbols with common meaning and force. Consequently effervescence is critical to social action. However, although effervescence can

be enough sometimes to motivate participation and conformity, the possibility always exists that it will be insufficient. In practice, many crucial social encounters deliver few emotional rewards. It is mysterious why anyone would be motivated to conform and to behave in a way which contributes to long term existence of a status group, when the immediate pay-off is so poor. Moreover, in any social setting, a participant might pursue other emotional ends and destroy the interaction in order to gratify selfish affective interests. In this case, they would also undermine the long-term production of exclusive goods for a status group. Effervescence is typically involved in interaction and in status group formation but, on its own, it does not necessarily compel individuals to cooperate and to contribute to the collective goods on which status groups are based.

Some further force must underpin and support pure effervescence which drives humans not only to want to gain emotional rewards but conformity, even if it means others will get larger emotional rewards. This paper has argued that interaction rituals are, in fact, underpinned not merely by pure effervescence but by the more robust mechanisms of shame and honour. The fear of shame and embarrassment, and the desire for recognition and reputation impel individuals to cooperate in interactions. These are the master emotions. Shame and honour work ubiquitously and universally through all social interactions and individuals instinctively internalise them to monitor their own and others' actions. Moreover, shame and honour are not merely affective – although they are intense emotions. Shame and honour are explicitly and inexorably tied to an individual's standing in a group and, therefore, to that individual's access to its exclusive collective goods. Humans fear shame not simply because they are psychologically vulnerable but because exclusion follows it. There is a very real cost to be born for being shamed. The cooperation and company of once beloved fellows is denied and the goods which that group monopolised are now denied. Shame and honour crucially tie behaviour in the here and now to the standards and interests of the status group

and the social order in the longer term. Doctors, lawyers, aircrew, workers and criminals are obliged to behave in line with the interests of their respective group affiliations in every micro-interaction, if they are to enjoy the full benefits of group membership.

The addition of the mechanism of shame and honour to Randall Collins theory is not a major revision. It is an amendment in line with the general content and intent of Collins' work. However, by recognising the role of shame and honour in social life more explicitly, it is possible to delineate the precise mechanism which connects the face-to-face interaction to the enduring social orders status group hierarchies more fully. By enjoining cooperation in micro-setting, shame and honour play an important role in stabilizing social groups and ultimately the entire social order. As such, shame and honour affirm the Durkheimian and Weberian traditions of the discipline and resolutely reject the current trends towards individualism and determinism. Under the concept of shame and honour, all human action is necessarily social and human social interaction involves unique processes and possesses distinctive causal powers.

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